



## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

PART	SUBJECT	RELEASE NUMBER
241 FW 7	Safety Operations	348
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT	Firefighting	DATE
Division of Refuges		February 7, 2000

### EXPLANATION OF MATERIAL TRANSMITTED:

This chapter describes safety standards for the Fire Management Program. It reflects changes required by 620 DM 1 and 2 and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review Report, December 18, 1995.



DIRECTOR

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### FILING INSTRUCTIONS:

Remove:

241 FW 7, 08/18/93, FWM 113 (1 sheet)

Insert:

241 FW 7, 02/07/00, FWM 348 (1 sheet)

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH**

**Occupational Safety and Health**

**Part 241 Safety Operations**

**Chapter 7 Firefighting**

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**7.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?** This chapter describes the safety standards established for our Fire Management Program. These standards provide for the safety of employees and the public, prevent the loss of suppression equipment and supplies, and minimize the occurrence of accidents. The Fire Management Handbook contains detailed guidance.

**7.2 What is the fire management policy?** We base our Wildland Fire Management policy on the Departmental Manual, (620 DM 1-2). It is our policy that:

**A.** Firefighter and public safety is the first priority of our Fire Management Program. With the possible exception of instances where the life of another is in jeopardy, we will not purposely expose our employees, contractors, or cooperators to life-threatening conditions or situations.

**B.** We will only assign trained and qualified people to fire management duties (232 FW 6). We will issue, train in its use, and require personnel to wear and use personal protective equipment (241 FW 3).

**C.** Structural firefighting is not our functional responsibility. You should only perform structure protection on an emergency basis to save lives. Fire personnel may assist in protecting wildlands around a structure or protecting the structure's exterior from approaching fire when you can accomplish such action safely. We will communicate the safety hazards associated with suppression activities around structures and transportation systems to our personnel.

**(1)** We will not knowingly place employees in positions where exposures to noxious gases or chemicals or other situations require the use of self-contained breathing apparatus.

**(2)** We will not commit personnel to structural fire suppression through cooperative agreements.

**7.3 How important is safety?** The safety of our employees and the public, preventing loss of suppression equipment and supplies, and minimizing the occurrence of accidents are the highest priorities in the Fire Management Program. Supervisors and employees share in the management responsibility for safety while involved in wildland and prescribed fire operations. We ensure safety through training, removal of hazards, and use of safety equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE).

**A. Fire Safety Training.** We list our training and

qualification requirements in 232 FW 6, Firefighter Training. We integrate safety through training courses for our personnel. All firefighters must attend an annual safety refresher training (see 232 FW 6).

**B. Personal Protective Equipment.** We will supply the personal protective equipment (PPE) listed below to personnel participating in wildland and prescribed fire operations. The type of position assignment (direct fireline work or support) will determine the need for various types of PPE. We will supply other safety equipment if unique Regional or local situations warrant. You must wear PPE in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and our requirements. We will ensure the use, adequacy, maintenance and sanitation of PPE that we issue. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) National Fire Equipment System (NFES) Catalog carries only PPE that meets American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards for the type of use. If you purchase PPE outside the NFES Catalog, it must meet ANSI standards and be comparable in cost.

**(1) Hard Hat.** Personnel on the fireline must wear hard hats at all times. You must use a chin strap to secure the hard hat when working in or around aircraft to prevent it from becoming a hazard to the aircraft. When operating all-terrain vehicles, it may be more appropriate to wear another type of head protection rather than the standard hard hat. Consider the predominant hazard when determining the type of head protection best suited to the mission.

**(2) Eye and Face Protection.** You must wear goggles when functioning in the following activities: nozzle, chainsaw, heliport and ramp, and retardant mixing operations. Other personnel in the immediate vicinity of these operations may also require eye protection. Tool sharpeners using power sharpeners will wear face shields offering full face protection.

**(3) Hearing Protection.**

**(a)** We will provide and require you to wear hearing protection when exposing you to a noise level in excess of 85 decibels. We will train employees in the use and cleaning of earplugs to prevent hygiene problems. See also 242 FW 3, Noise Control and Hearing Conservation.

**(b)** Personnel functioning in any activities with potentially damaging noise levels will wear earmuff hearing protection devices. These activities include: chainsaw and portable pump, heliport and aircraft ramp, retardant mixing, and engine operations. Intermittent saw and pump operators

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may use earplugs instead. National Fire Equipment System kits contain earmuffs or earplugs for these operations. If you maintain kits at field offices, they must comply with hearing protection standards.

**(4) Gloves.** We will issue all-leather gloves to employees requiring hand protection.

**(5) Fire Resistant Clothing.** When engaging in wildland or prescribed fire operations, you must wear fire-resistant clothing consisting of an aramid fiber shirt and trousers, or a flight suit if involved in aviation operations as a crew member. You must wear undergarments made of 100-percent cotton or wool, or chemically treated fire-resistant material because most man-made fibers melt under exposure to flame or extreme radiant heat. Do not wear uniform clothing under fire shirts or trousers due to the synthetic material of some items, and the potential heat stress contributed by an extra layer of clothing regardless of the type of material. You may not wear 100 percent cotton clothing in place of aramid material. You must wear protective clothing in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and our requirements. Supervisors will ensure the use, adequacy, maintenance, and sanitation of clothing that we issue.

**(6) Fire Shelters.** We will train our employees participating in wildland or prescribed fire operations in the use of fire shelters. We will supply shelters to all personnel assigned to fireline duties, including prescribed fires, and require they carry one. You should carry your shelter in a manner so that it is readily and easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

**(7) Leg Protection.** All chainsaw operators must wear chainsaw chaps.

**(8) First Aid Kits.** We will issue each firefighter an individual first aid kit and require him/her to carry it. Each crew will carry a crew-type first aid kit. See National Fire Equipment System Catalog for samples of first aid kits.

**(9) Foot Protection.** You must wear heavy duty, all leather, lace-type work boots with non-slip (Vibram type) melt-resistant soles and heels when working on fires. The leather top must be at least 8 inches (20.3 cm) in height, measured from the top of the heel. Some situations may require special footwear such as waders, hip boots, snake boots, etc.

**C. Work/Rest, Length of Commitment, and Rest and Recuperation.** To maintain safe, productive incident activities, incident management personnel must manage

work and rest periods, assignment duration, and shift length for crews, overhead, and support personnel. We have adopted work/rest guidelines, length of commitment and rest, and recuperation guidelines described in the NWCG Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook.

**D. Vehicle Operation.**

**(1)** There are hour limitations to your duty shift if you drive as part of your assignment on wildland or prescribed fire operations. These limitations apply to personnel working directly with an incident. Driving means the operation of a fire apparatus to or from an incident on a designated highway or roadway. Reference the NWCG Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook.

**(2)** If your assignment requires a Commercial Driver's License, Federal Motor Carriers Safety Regulations, Part 395.3 and State Laws restrict your assignment to 10 hours driving time in a 15-hour duty day with 8 hours off between shifts. Even if you are not under legal restriction limiting driving hours, do not exceed 10 hours driving time in a 16-hour duty day with 8 hours off between shifts.

**7.4 What are the requirements for using specialized firefighting equipment?** Before using any specialized equipment you must attend a user/operator orientation or training session conducted by an individual with experience and training in the use of the equipment. This includes, but is not limited to, use of:

**A.** Firing equipment such as terra-torch, drip torch, pressurized torch, helitorch, and aerial pingpong dispenser.

**B.** Fusees or flare guns.

**C.** Chainsaws and other power cutting tools.

**D.** Off-road vehicles such as all-terrain vehicles or tracked vehicles and engines.